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Minuteman

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The recent risk behavior survey revealed some disturbing, but not entirely surprising information about LHS students.

Alarming statistics show high-risk behavior at LHS

Drug and alcohol use above state average

by Christine Chiou and Nick Rose

Results of the 1995 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey (MYRBS) indicate high rates of illegal or risky behavior, such as drinking, smoking, and drug use, at Lexington High School.

Jennifer Wolfrum, Lexington Coordinator for Health Education, presented the MYRBS results at the January 2 School Committee meeting. She called the survey "a fairly accurate assessment that gives us a picture of what's going on." She adds, "What this survey does is dispel the sense of immunity, that this kind of behavior doesn't happen in Lexington. It is important that communities talk."

Among appalling statistics were the following: 35 percent of students smoke cigarettes regularly, about 50 percent drank alcohol in the month prior to the survey, and 42 percent had tried marijuana at least once These percentages are significantly higher than the state's averages. Each percentage point represents six to eight people.

Additionally, in the last year, almost 25 percent of students have seriously considered suicide. Around 44 percent of students surveyed said they had been offered, sold, or given drugs on school property during the 12 months prior to the survey. That figure is well above the 31 percent that answered yes to the same question in a 1993 statewide survey. In the Lexington survey, 33 percent said they had used marijuana in the last 30 days, and 20.5 percent reported using other illegal drugs at some point.

Parents and school board members are especially alarmed because most of these behaviors are illegal. However, notes Wolfrum, "These statistics are not especially surprising to me, both as a health educator and as a parent. Young people experiment, break away from adults. Any of these behaviors [smoking, drinking, using drugs] are vehicles for this."

"The statistics are pretty accurate. Marijuana and smoking are the biggest problems in the school."

-Senior Millie Roy

Some have tried to explain away the statistics by claiming they are artificially inflated. As senior Millie Roy, student representative to the School Committee, says, "I think the statistics are pretty accurate. Marijuana and smoking are the biggest problems in the school."

Wolfrum points out that there are areas of encouragement as well. For some risky behaviors, Lexington students fall below the state averages. Three-fourths of students surveyed have never had sexual intercourse, compared to 50 percent statewide. Of the students who are sexually active, two-thirds use condoms. Ninety percent of all students have been taught about AIDS and HIV in school. These results can be attributed to health courses at the middle and high schools, which provide accurate information about AIDS and HIV, promote abstinence, and increase awareness of condoms and STDs.

The MYRBS was developed by the Center for Disease Control and is administered biannually by the Massachusetts Department of Education. In the spring of 1995, Lexington was randomly selected to participate in the survey. Completing the survey was voluntary; parents had the option to withhold permission for their children to take it. Six hundred and sixty-one students from all four grade levels answered questions about tobacco, alcohol, drug use; sexual behaviors; weapon carrying, physical fighting; suicidal behaviors; and dietary behaviors and physical activity.

This survey has been tested nationwide for validity. Says Wolfrum, "Inevitably, there are going to be errors. But I think this is going to make more parents involved, more teachers aware. We've got to promote serious communication."

Community debates teacher report cards

by Stefanie Berman

On January 9, the Lexington School Committee held a public hearing to discuss teacher and administrator performance standards, as mandated by the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993.

Under the state law, each school system must develop an evaluation process that provides information to "enhance professionalism and accountability of teachers and administrators and enables them to assist all students to perform at high levels."

The performance standards hearing was conducted to provide guidance for the School Committee in the collective bargaining process with the Lexington Education Association taking place this spring. The resulting evaluation must be submitted to the state education department for review by September.

The state has provided a rigorous outline of items to serve as a framework for local school committees creating evaluation tools.

"Does this mean that every teacher is scoring an 'A' on every standard? Absolutely not."

-Superintendent Jeffrey Young

The standards include seven topics that measure "effective teaching": currency in curriculum, effective planning and assessment of curriculum, effective management of the class, effective instruction, promotion of high standards and expectations for student achievement, equity and appreciation for diversity, and fulfillment of professional responsibilities.

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Senate Day raises questions

Visiting students offer array of suggestions, ideas

by Sarah Park

What the heck are speed bumps for? Can I get gym credit for doing sports? Why can't I get condoms at school anymore? These are just a few of the questions that were answered at the second annual Senate Day open forum. The entire school community was invited to express their opinions and learn about the many issues concerning the future of LHS at the December 13 meeting.

Visiting students raised issues that formed the agenda for the meet-

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By the looks of these happy seniors, social studies teacher Sal Lopes gets an "A" for the day.

Inside

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Nothing can stop this whirlwind. *Page 7.*

The recent rain and warm weather have come as a relief after weeks of snow.

Standing room only on second annual Senate Day

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ing. Many of the 20 or 30 students who attended for the first time felt that Senate Day was a worthwhile experience. "The issues [that were discussed] were really relevant to what goes on at school," comments senior Sarah Rosner.

Students and teachers brought up several topics for discussion. The topics covered included graduation requirements, the so-called "smoking corner," the looming population boom at LHS and space shortages in coming years, the student parking lot, gym credit for participation in after-school sports, the unavailability of condoms, and the shortage of custodial staff.

Some felt that having an open agenda was misrepresentative of how Senate normally conducts its meetings. Rosner remarks that "it was helpful to talk about all of the issues, but the meeting gave no sense that anything was actually being done [about the problems]." Junior Ashley Osgerby adds, "It seemed like students were just bringing up grievances that only the administration could resolve. I don't think Senate has the power to solve a lot of the issues that were discussed, like the shortage of custodians."

"There are restrictions on what the Senate can do," says senior Margot Minardi, moderator of the Senate. The Senate can not, for example, interfere with the school budget or collective bargaining agreements. "We have to keep the perspective that we can start to improve the school without spending money or targeting specific people," Minardi adds. Senior Monica Martinez-Tamayo, secretary of the Senate, notes that the Executive Committee plans to assign each topic raised at the meeting to a standing committee of the Senate. In committees, Senators will research and craft solutions to some of the problems discussed.

Due to time constraints, not all of the topics originally scheduled were discussed on December 13. After two Wednesday snow days, the meeting resumed on January 10.

Senate Day attendance was up from last year. According to senior Senator Dave Myung, "a good number of students came to the meeting. They showed a genuine interest in Senate and in the issues that we discussed." The Library Media Center was so crowded that midway through X-block entering students had to stand or sit on the floor.

Sophomore Senator Rena Miller-Jacobs comments that "the diversity [of all the students who came] was cool. There were students from all grades, and it was nice that the LABBB students were there. They had lots of good ideas." "The meeting really brought the school together," Rosner adds.

The increase in attendance may be due to the efforts of the Senate Communications Committee and individual senators. The Communications Committee, led by Martinez-Tamayo, spent many weeks planning for the event and posting advertisements to encourage people to come. Many Senators spent lunch blocks on December 12 and 13 handing out fliers and answering questions about Senate. All Senators wore blue sashes to identify themselves as representatives. The sashes were, as one observer put it, "ugly," yet they certainly attracted attention.

In sum, Myung remarks that "the administration will always be making decisions [about important issues], so students need to get involved if they care about their future. Senate is the way people get their opinions across." He adds, "we should tell people that every Wednesday is Senate Day!"

Town discusses teacher evaluation

STANDARDS- From page 1

Currently, the Lexington Public School system uses an evaluation system nearly identical to the one described in the state standards. However, while Lexington may satisfy state regulations for evaluation standards, Superintendent Jeffrey Young was first to point out at the meeting, "Does this mean that every teacher is scoring 'A' on every standard? Absolutely not."

Lexington residents in attendance at the hearing offered a plethora of suggestions on both the content and implementation of the evaluation process. Concerned community members raised questions concerning teacher-parent communication, community outreach, and student input in the evaluation process. Several speakers voiced skepticism about effective evaluation, reform, and removal processes for "professional status" (essentially meaning tenured) teachers.

Many at the forum found the current evaluation tool, as well as the state suggestions, "too vague," lacking "concrete and measurable" ways to assess teacher performance. Frequently used terms, such as "effective" and "appropriate" were criticized as too subjective. Instead, many parents advised that products like lesson plans, bibliographies, and research be considered as well.

Confusion over the removal process for professional status teachers led Young to explain the new state law of June 1993. In accordance with the law, the principal and superintendent can dismiss incompetent teachers, whereas prior to the reform act, a school board hearing was necessary. Although this measure was created to expedite the dismissal process, parents were still disquieted about the infrequency of removals of incompetent teachers from the Lexington school system. Those whose children had suffered "destructive teachers" were anxious to see greater accountability for teachers with professional status.

While the evaluation process continues to be scrutinized, the content of the ultimate form of teacher evaluation remains elusive. Despite the frustrating process, Young reassured the audience that "discussions on contract do not end the day it is signed." Young and the School Committee continue to welcome additional comments and concerns regarding teacher and administrator performance standards.

News Briefs

APRIL VACATION SURVIVES JANUARY SNOW

In a move that warmed the hearts of every senior, the School Committee voted last week not to reschedule any snow days during April vacation. Instead, three days will be tacked on to the end of the school year. As it looks as though it will continue to be a snowy winter, underclassmen can anticipate sweltering in classrooms well into June. Hearing the news, gleeful senior Kiran Raj exclaimed, "It sure is funny that all of the freshmen, sophomores, and juniors will be in school while we're at the beach." The final day of school, previously a Tuesday, will now fall on Friday.

-Kenny Shei

LHS DANCE FANTASTIC

The energy and pizazz of the LHS dance company was on display in the auditorium on Saturday, January 20. For the second year in a row, Dance Fantasia presented an exciting and diverse conglomeration of dance pieces. About 30 dancers participated: some had no dance experience, while others had backgrounds in ballet, jazz, or Chinese dance. The strengths of the concert were the union of these many styles and the creative choreography. There were swing numbers, an African-style piece, a tribute to Michael Jackson, a lyric piece, solos, and Chinese dancing.

There were also the confusing artistic commentaries. Dance club president Cara Consilvio feels "proud that the school gives students a chance to create an original and moving show." She notes that "the hard work put into the dances was evident in the quality of our show." The club and the audience had such a great time that the dance company is planning a Dance Fantasia II with new choreography for June 8.

-Laura Ginns

Seniors Morgane Landel and Millie Roy try to suppress their glee over the onset of second semester.

Students surveyed about risk survey

by Christine Chiou

Reactions to the Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey (MYRBS; see story, page 1) were mixed. Some viewed it as a time-wasting, inaccurate survey, while others considered it a useful, indicative examination of the issues. The survey addressed issues ranging from sexual behavior to drug and alcohol abuse to nutrition.

Junior Roseanne Bellini commented, "I'm not surprised [by the results]. I think that those statistics are probably comparable to most of the schools in the area." Junior classmate Anagha Nadkarni concurs: "I'm not astounded at the results. I was surprised at how close the results came to the state averages, though-- not because I think Lexington students are angels, but because it dismisses the idea that upper class towns have less of these problems."

In addition to the survey itself, students were also given a lined piece of paper asking for their comments about MYRBS. Many students believe that the survey should have probed the "why" behind the statistics. Others expressed doubt about the survey's validity, wondering if it captured a representative sample and if some students may have been tempted to "cheat" by answering inaccurately.

However, student responses proved otherwise, because many kids commented on specific questions in the survey, or expressed their opinion about a topic covered by the survey. Other responses ranged from "good, thought-provoking questions" to "This is how you use our tax dollars" to "God, it's even in Spanish."

Sophomore Chris Van Nostrand is unaware that his picture is being taken as he counts every snowflake in the main quad.

Writing workshop open for business

by Margot Minardi

That little room beyond the student library Xerox machine is not merely a miniature museum for mural masterpieces, although the artwork adorning its white-paper walls is attracting considerable attention. The room is in fact the headquarters of the Writing Workshop.

The Writing Workshop tutors are a crew of multi-talented juniors and seniors who share a love for writing and helping others. During most blocks of the day, at least one tutor is available in the Workshop office to help all interested students with their writing.

The Writing Workshop thrives on variety. Students of all ages and abilities are encouraged to come and discuss their writing with a tutor. Work in any stage--from a few ideas scribbled on a McDonald's napkin to a final draft just in need of polishing--is welcome. Tutors are prepared to help writers in all subjects, including math, English, history, and psychology.

The Writing Workshop's mission? No student at LHS should feel overwhelmed by a writing assignment. The Workshop is in its brightly-decorated room to pass on the message that writing is exciting!

In summer, LHS student is her own page in government history

by Dalia Hochman

The other day I was waiting in line in Stop & Shop when I happened to overhear a pair of shoppers behind me denigrating politicians and American government in general. On one hand I was duly impressed: it's not often that one hears such erudite conversations amid the People magazines and the strawberry-banana Bubblelicious. On the other hand, I was dismayed by what the two people were actually saying.

Although a year ago, I might have nodded in agreement, now I was tempted to intervene and tell the two what I know, firsthand, about Congress. In fact, I almost did exactly that until I realized that I was eavesdropping...

This summer I worked as a page in the United States House of Representatives. The word "page" is just a polite way of saying "Congressman's servant," because my work included delivering packages, taking messages, announcing the vote, and, my favorite "job," trying to see how many times I could be on C-Span in one day. (Of course, the other pages and I all had gullible family members glued to their cable, hoping to catch a glimpse of us!)

Despite the tedious work, all 70 of us felt privileged to be the only House employees allowed on the floor and we often sat for hours, hanging on the gold banisters at the back of the chamber, mesmerized by the debate. Our own discussions and debates would continue at our Washington home, the dormitory a block from the Capitol. When we weren't working, which was rare (I once worked 30 hours in a row), we were free to explore Washington and all of its educational and not-so-educational attractions.

As a witness to the 104th Congress I can confidently refute many of the common criticisms of government. Although bitter partisanship prevails, even among pages, there is a genuine respect for the right to hold a different opinion. Despite their disparate approaches, most of the Representatives were united in their strong desire to help the people. Their good will was evident in their passion, their commitment to working interminable hours, and even their interaction with us pages.

Another valuable lesson I learned from the hours I spent in the Democratic cloakroom, eavesdropping this time on the Congresspeople's discussion, was that every issue is weighted with enormous complexities. When we debate an issue in history class, we tend to believe that our position is obvious and correct. Yet in the real debate, the one which will affect millions of people's lives, there is no absolute "right answer," because every choice has both positive and negative repercussions. What I finally understood was that true leadership means making one of these hard decisions and standing by it, despite the inevitable ramifications.

...That's what I would have said to those two people in Stop & Shop the other day had I had the chance. Not everyone can be a page and see the everyday nuances of Congress (by the way, Newt is really fat!), but everyone can attempt to look at issues with a more circumspect, cautious attitude before making broad generalizations and assumptions. The one thing that I will take away from my time on Pennsylvania Avenue is the feeling that our government is really a service of the people. We have the direct power to control our leaders and, if we still are not satisfied with them, we can become leaders ourselves.

Despite the cold and snow of the Blizzard of '96, friendly smiles like these are keeping LHS warm.

Pingpong club serves excitement at LHS

by Kiran Raj

For the first time in Lexington High School history, pingpong players of all levels are able to showcase their abilities while improving their games. This is the result of a pingpong club formed by senior co-presidents Kiran Raj, Nick Bartlett, and David Myung. Principal Philip Lanoue has agreed to be the faculty advisor for this fledgling organization.

"I live for pingpong."

-Senior Adam Bund

Interested students signed up to participate in the club at the Student Activities Fair this fall. The organizers knew there was support for pingpong at the High School but were overwhelmed by the massive response. Over 150 different students signed up to test their skills against their colleagues and have fun.

As co-president Bartlett says, "I was overjoyed that so many kids wanted to play pong. It certainly lends credibility to the notion that pingpong is a major American sport." The club's first tournament was held after school on a Friday in October. For a tournament held on such short notice, there was an excellent turnout.

The organizers of the tournament envisioned five different levels of playing ability, from novice to Forrest Gump. A player in one level would only play players in his own level. That way, all the matches would ideally be competitive and everyone would get a chance to play. Due to time constraints, the first tournament only got the play to the semifinals, but future tournaments will crown a champion.

"I think the idea of having a tournament is a good one," says co-president Myung. "It allows people who normally wouldn't to play each other, see how they match up against their pingpong brethren. It also allows non-players to have an afternoon of learning and excitement." The October tournament has been the only tournament so far because of space constraints. Winter sports teams need the same space that pingpong does. Players are still hopeful that many more tournaments will occur as the weather gets better. As pingpong fanatic Adam Bund says, "I live for pingpong. These tournaments allow me to display my ability for all to see. I hope there will be another tournament real soon."

The Shoveler Manifesto

Shovelers of the world, unite!

The Plow Man hates shovelers. People who clear their own driveways know this for a fact. Just as you're done clearing the snow, the Plow Man comes by with his monster plow truck and plows a foot-high bank of snow at your feet. You look in the window of the truck and you swear, the guy is laughing at you. You shake your fist in fury, but in the back of your mind, you know he's ostensibly doing a deed for the common good.

After all, Plow Man really owns all the land in Lexington, even the space that is supposedly "public" property. You can't get anywhere without him. Once you are lulled into believing he is entirely benevolent, he will stop plowing your street. You and your family will become his helpless serfs, bound to your snow-covered quarters.

Think for a moment. Plow Man is the single most powerful force in Lexington during the winter. We need Plow Man. But suppose Plow Man were to abuse his power, and make life difficult for certain households, like, say, mine? I have no other explanation for what happened to me the last time it snowed.

It was the day it snowed about six inches but school wasn't canceled. Arriving home from track practice, I remember Bryant Lee and Brian Claise exclaiming in unison from the front seats, "whoa, what happened?!" To my horror, the beautiful six-foot wall I had piled up over the last month from shoveling had been toppled. There was a waist-high snowbank heaped at the edge of my driveway. My brother and I had to literally *climb* over it to get into the driveway.

> Buy a shovel. Buy your neighbor a shovel... Bundle up in your parka and mittens, percolate the hot chocolate, and bid the Plow Man beware, because the shovelers of Lexington are taking a stand.

As I trudged through the snow to the walkway, I heard a rumbling sound in the distance. I looked up and saw the bright lights of the Plow Man's truck cruising the street... and I swear, he was laughing! I glanced at my neighbors' houses and didn't see any snowbanks in front of their driveways. It seemed that the Plow Man had heaped the snow of my entire neighborhood in front of my driveway.

Logically, one would consider snow to be the problem. After all, snow is what is being plowed, piled, and shoveled, is it not? We all know, though, that snow is not the enemy. Snow is our friend, our ally. Snow means skiing, sledding, snowball fights, and snow football. Better yet, snow means no school (and no make-up days for us seniors, ha ha!). For a brief moment last week, I cursed the snow (actually, my back did). But last Saturday at 1 a.m., I made peace with the snow, and I shoveled the entire soggy mess it left on my driveway without a word of complaint. Snow and New England co-exist and they are one... and we are one with them.

The true enemy is the Plow Man. He cannot be defeated, only endured and tolerated. I am at war with the Plow Man, but I know I am at his mercy this winter. Or am I? Fellow shovelers, we cannot let Plow Man think that we need him. Let him plow all the snow he wants on your turf; in fact, let him dump all the snow in Lexington on you if he wants. As far as I'm concerned, Plow Man can do whatever his sadistic schemes call for, because I'll just keep on shoveling.

The next time it snows, position yourselves at the ends of your driveways as Plow Man approaches. Remember where you live, and stand your ground. Don't shovel unless plowed upon. Plow Man means to have a war, so let it begin here.

So buy a shovel. Buy your neighbor a shovel. In the words of the Beatles, "get ready for a (shoveler) revolution!" Bundle up with your parkas and mittens, percolate the hot chocolate, and bid the Plow Man beware, because the shovelers of Lexington have arrived.

-Dave Myung

CORRECTIONS:

In the December 1995 issue of the *Musket*, the cross-country article on page 7 was written by sports correspondent Michael Hemond, not Dave Myung, who, by the way, is NOT a Communist.

This "freshman mixer" leaves students on the wrong track

Over recent years, the term "tracking" has become an obscenity among the politically correct. Innumerable critics charge that ability-based grouping lowers educational achievement among all students by diminishing academic standards for weaker students and by failing to expose stronger students to a diversity of viewpoints. Conversely, these individuals assert that heterogeneous grouping not only affords a challenging educational experience for all students but also fosters a sense of community and cooperation that is lacking in homogeneously-grouped classes.

A number of influential individuals within the school community have begun to question the merits of homogeneous grouping, which has become a pervasive element of the educational process at Lexington High School. Currently, in math, science, and foreign language departments, courses are homogeneously grouped beginning in the freshman year. English and social studies are generally leveled during sophomore, junior, and senior years. The only major exception to this rule is the freshman English and social studies sequence, which is grouped heterogeneously. The content and structure of these courses reveal both the strengths and the flaws of such grouping.

Perhaps the most serious flaw inherent in the freshman year program is the ubiquitous "watering down" of the curriculum. Students in freshman English classes no longer read *Romeo and Juliet* in its entirety. Similarly, during freshman year, many history classes progress through the material at such a tedious rate that they fail to cover the entire curriculum, leaving students with significant gaps in their historical knowledge.

What kind of work are freshmen doing? Enter the classroom of almost any ninth-grade history teacher and you will notice an abundance of colorful posters, diagrams, and models produced by the students. Ostensibly, such "projects" permit students to attain in-depth knowledge of a single topic area. Of course, these methods also allow teachers to raise the averages of hard-working but less able students who lack the intellectual capacity to keep up with the pace of the class but who are willing to cut-and-paste their way to a higher grade.

Diminishing the grade disparity between students of radically different abilities seems to be an unspoken objective of the ninth-grade curriculum. For example, freshman English and history teachers frequently assign "group work." In many cases, such activities entail a heterogeneous group of students collectively producing a paper or project submitted for a single grade. The end result is to raise the average of underperforming students and to lower the average of stronger students.

Advocates of heterogeneous grouping assert that such "group work" parallels cooperative strategies increasingly favored by employers. However, in a workplace environment, employers fire incompetent or irresponsible workers. The public schools do not have that luxury. Instead, conscientious students of higher ability are often forced to shoulder an undue burden.

In one sense, it is hard to dispute assertions that heterogeneous grouping fosters a greater sense of community among students of diverse backgrounds and abilities. However, academic goals should not necessarily be subjugated to abstruse notions of cultural pluralism. Is the primary purpose of the public schools to educate young people or to strive for the creation of a yet-undefined social utopia?

Freshman English and history teachers and many of their students are certainly trying hard. The bottom line is that there are serious flaws in the present model of heterogeneously-grouped classes. Until the freshman English and history program is ameliorated, any decision to expand heterogeneous grouping to other subject areas or grade levels should be approached with extreme caution.

-Steve Pawliczek

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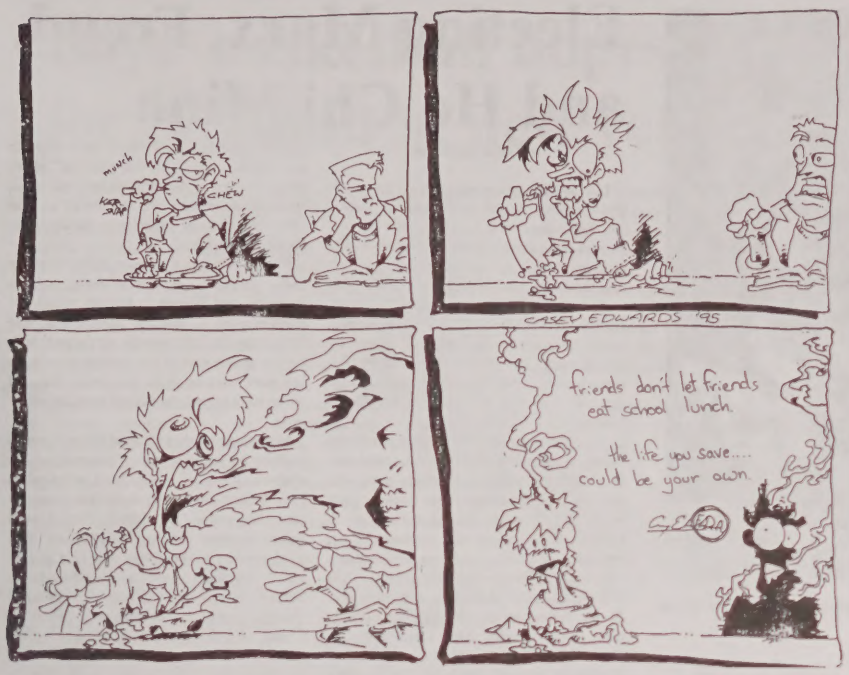


Get involved! Take advantage of your friendly LHS Senator

The "Smoking Corner." Condoms. Outside eating. Graduation requirements. Trash. Sports for gym credit. Speed bumps.

No doubt one of these topics has you at least mildly interested. And for those of you who still couldn't care less, the LHS Senate went one step further: for two consecutive days in December, we traveled around the school wearing foolish blue Miss America-style sashes across our torsos. Contrary to public opinion, we were not entering a warped beauty pageant. Nor were we psyching ourselves up for a "game" against another school. Instead, we were merely trying to do what you elected us to do: serve you. Yet, sadly, our heroic attempts to elicit your interest and suggestions seem to have been in vain.

> While we care so much about selecting that "perfect" school to attend later, we hardly think twice about improving the school that we do attend. College and high school are different. But who says high school can't be just as fulfilling?

Not a single student even cared (or dared?) to approach the Senate information table two Senators and I set up in D-caf one lunch block. Only a handful of people came to attend our Special Senate Day meeting during X-block on December 13, a meeting with you as the sole item on our agenda. Surely no one is completely satisfied with our school. Did you know that your very own Senate is endowed with the power to address many of your concerns?

In fact, the Senate has jurisdiction over virtually all school-related matters, as long as we don't violate state or federal law, or interfere with collective bargaining agreements, teacher evaluation, school department fund allotment, or individual teaching styles. What the Senate *can* do is limited only by what you believe should be changed. The Student-Faculty Senate created and revised the community service program at LHS. It made condoms available to students. It changed voting procedures to make student government elections more fair and more real-world. It has done numerous "little" things that have affected you. At a Senate meeting, you may witness (and participate in) a discussion about anything from substitute teachers to garbage cans to attendance policy.

In a recent *Musket* editorial, junior Eli Blatt denounced LHS's "air of apathy." Why not confront that apathy by getting involved, or at least interested? Find out what your elected representatives are talking about. Senate minutes are available at all of the hot spots on campus: the SAC, the Career Center, the main office, and the library. Attend a Senate meeting during X-block (the bus doesn't come until 2:25 anyway). All Senate meetings are open to the public, and your representatives are eager to hear your opinions and suggestions. Find out who your Senators are, and talk to them about your concerns for the school. Leave your Senators notes in their SAC mailboxes. Make suggestions for bills. Write a bill. The possibilities are endless.

The truth is that we're all stuck here at Lexington High School for four years of our lives. Four years! That's the same amount of time most of us plan to spend in college. Yet while we care so much about selecting that "perfect" school to attend later, we hardly think twice about improving the school that we do attend. College and high school are different. But who says high school can't be just as fulfilling?

-Cynthia Lin

Speed bump: a mountainous problem for student drivers

During open forum at the last ever-more-popular annual Senate Day on December 13, senior Monica Roy suggested that the Senate discuss lowering the speed bumps in the student parking lot. As a licensed senior (who has been with a license for nine months, two weeks, three days and counting....) who drives to school whenever possible, I love turning into the parking lot, showing off my angular parking skills, and hitting Bruegger's or driving around aimlessly, honking and laughing at underclassmen, during free blocks.

What I can't stand, though, is hearing the crunch of my car over the speed bump if I hit it going more than three feet an hour. Or slamming the brakes and banging my head because some one in front of me is stuck on the bump, which I swear must be at least seven inches over the National Speed Bump Association's recommended height for speed bumps in student parking lots. The other bumps on campus, surrounding the faculty and visitor parking lots are not nearly so bad. But the student parking lot's speed bump needs to be reexamined. At this point, I think that I have learned from experience the best technique for getting over the hump and avoiding maximum damage to my car. And trust me, I've tried them all. From my friends, I've learned even more.

There is the *I'll-Just-Ignore-It-And-Hope-I-Won't-Feel-Or-Notice-Any-Parts-Falling-Out-From-Under-My-Car-And-The-Uncomfortable-Jarring-Feeling-In-My-Head-Might-Even-Get-Me-Out-Of-Gym Method*, the *Hey-If-I-Gun-It-The-Security-Guard-Won't-Notice-And-My-Blaring-Music-Will-Cover-Up-The-Sound-Of-My-Muffler-Dragging-On-The-Ground Technique*, the *I'll-Go-Over-At-Two-Miles-An-Hour-And-Subsequently-Cause-A-Traffic-Jam-Out-To-Mass. Ave.-But-At-Least-I-Won't-Hurt-The-Car-And-My-Mom-Won't-Beat-Me Approach* (we need another entrance to the parking lot, too, but I guess that is tacitly understood by all), and finally, the *I'll-Accelerate-From-A-Hundred-Yards-Out-And-Break-At-The-Last-Second-Hoping-That-Momentum-Will-Somehow-Carry-Me-Over-And-Do-Minimal-Damage-To-My-Car Method* (widely known as the *I-Really-Did-Read-My-Physics-Book,-Mr.-O'Reilly Maneuver*.)

One of my friends' car is kind of low to the ground and scrapes the abnormally high speed bump outside our lovely institution, creating a sound comparable to Dave Myung's singing accompanied by cats sharpening their claws on a blackboard. Being in the car and having to hear this sound is a situation to be avoided. Her car is also, so to speak, the driving force behind the suggestion at Senate Day. You have to give her credit, though. She manages most of the time to get over safe and sound(less) due to about a billion and one attempts to get it right in the last year and a half. It takes slow speeds (< 10 mph) and a certain angle (43*17') to do it, though, and that's not always possible when rushing back from Taco Bell to make Mech's English class. So the perfect solution for her and all other harried student drivers? LOWER THE SPEED BUMP.

Give the security guard a day off and use the money saved to shave a little off the top of the speed bump. It can't cost all that much, and think of the benefits. First of all, there is the obvious reduction in damage to the underside of one's car. And think of the stress reduction as well: with PSATs and SATs and APs and grades and sports and extracurricular activities to deal with, just making it so that we don't have to worry about damaging the car and dealing with the wrath of our parents ("You did what to the car?!? Do you have any idea what it will cost to fix that?!?") would be a welcome relief in the tension of each day. More people could drive into the parking lot at the legal speed (not the LHS parking lot speed limit, though, which is unknown to all but Marge).

Those potential high-speed chases would be neat for the rest of us to watch, especially those bored in math class. Not to mention the lawsuits the administration would avoid from berated parents whose cars and children obviously suffer from Speed Bump Syndrome (symptoms are trauma to the underside of the car and to the emotional well-being of the student). Finally, more students would make it back to class on time, saving the effort of dealing with unnecessary disciplinary action and drastically reducing the amount of litter on campus since students will have the extra seconds needed to throw their trash into waste barrels (we wouldn't even need to get those neon trash cans because we'd all have the time to care about our planet).

The argument makes sense, doesn't it? It was even presented in a logical, orderly fashion. It is irrefutable that lowering the speed bumps in the student parking lot would make a positive difference at Lexington High School. In the long run, it could even solve all the problems plaguing our school today, setting an example for institutions across the nation and around the world, and make the world a better place.

-Eling Chang

Letter to the Editor

Teachers are evaluated all day long

Stefanie Berman's opinion piece, while written with intelligence and balance, still betrays some fundamental misunderstandings about the current status of teachers in our society. When my father entered the profession in the mid-1950's as an industrial arts teacher, he was able to buy a house and raise a family -- on a single income! He was respected by society. Those were the days of the "tenure bargain" you speak of.

In the 1990's, the notion of buying a house on a teacher's salary is laughable at best. Teachers are widely perceived to have "failed" society. The "tenure bargain" entitles an LHS faculty trained at some of the best universities on the planet to devote nights and weekends to their craft, while earning a fraction of the salary paid to their similarly-trained peers in the private sector. Class sizes are on the rise, and "out-of-classroom" demands will only increase as reform and reorganization continue.

It is ludicrous to assert, as Ms. Berman does, that we are evaluated three times a year. In fact, we are evaluated daily, by one of the savviest group of "clients" (LHS students) in the country. If a teacher is failing to live up to the high expectations here, I know of few students (or, once informed, their parents) who will wait patiently for an administrator to "discover" this fact. Get real.

I am not complaining. I am glad to work here. But please don't insult me by calling this job, tenured or not, a "bargain."

-Bill McCants
Psychology Teacher

This group of friends has mistaken the Musket photographer for the Yearbook photographer, who is actually the same person.

photo by Joe Yoon

Peeking on workings of Yearbook 1996

by Amy DiLuna and Katie Gross

No one ever says, "Wow, this yearbook is so cool! Not only are there way too many pictures of me, but my hair looks really good in every single one!" Nobody appreciates the late-night cram sessions in the SAC or the frantic, life-threatening scrambles to the Federal Express office in blizzards to send off pages moments before they're due. No one knows how difficult it is to spell names correctly or to come up with a snappy caption that hasn't been used before ("Varsity soccer player Maria Bennani smiles big for the camera" or "Wearing a blue shirt, Shannon Biron was invited to the prom by a boy"). Frankly, making the yearbook is harder than it looks to the average civilian. It's more than a job; it's an adventure.

There are, however, advantages to a position like Co-Editor-In-Chief, namely, blatant abuses of power. Yes, if you rob a bank in five years, it is the picture of you picking your nose in band that they will flash on the five o'clock news. But aside from the fun and mean-spirited games, yearbook-making is a long and tedious process that requires skill, commitment, and insanity.

First, there must be a theme. No one knows why, but apparently there are "yearbook gods" who reside on high and choose random rules to guide yearbook creators. It is these same deities who decide that the yearbook theme is so exciting that it must be kept secret from the student body until that magical day when the yearbook is revealed. We chose from many themes, including "Funny Farm," which would have included pictures of people we don't like wearing pig noses or bunny ears, and "Upside Down School," which speaks for itself. Finally we decided on a theme that has, as usual, absolutely nothing to do with this year, this school, or this town. Once again, we're just doing our job.

The next step in the yearbook process is that pesky "making of the yearbook" thing. Generally, that is put off until the last possible minute, which inevitably brings us to step three, "ordering from Bertucci's to avoid starvation." As much fun as it is being in school for fifteen hours straight, these late night SAC parties lose their allure after three weeks. Nevertheless, we persevere.

Creating a yearbook means bringing together pictures and writing ("copy") to document an individual year. The goal is to make each yearbook reflect the unique character of the graduating class: it should not be possible to put any year on the cover. Yearbook editors, guided by the co-editors-in-chief and advisor Karen Mechem, are responsible for developing different sections of the yearbook, from student life to sports. The editors-in-chief communicate with the publishers, coordinate advertising, and help editors plan and design their sections.

There are three components to yearbook design: layout, pictures, and copy. Each page within a section has a subtopic, such as "volleyball" for sports or "the weather" for student life. A dominant picture and title on each page display the subtopic, which may relate to the overall theme, and surrounding pictures are chosen to relate to the copy. The best subtopics are interesting and unique. Yearbook editors strive to represent the school's diversity by featuring copy and photos of people from all different groups.

Sometimes making the yearbook seems like a thankless task, but the final reward is sweet. One early summer day, all the months of cranky tirades and seemingly endless frustration disappear into the pages of this beautiful book that represents our friends, our school, our town, and us. No matter how many names we have spelled "creatively," or how many captions are in the wrong place, we know that we have taken on this enormous, impossible task. So go ahead, all of you. Remind us that there's only one picture of you in the senior section, or that there's a capital "L" in your name that we missed. We'll just smile and nod, too caught up in the glow of our own achievement to notice. Besides, we probably did it on purpose.

YEARBOOK 1996 ON SALE NOW

$48.00 each
Order forms available in Main Office

Electing Marx, Freud, and Ho Chi Minh

by Dafna Hochman

Life at LHS as a senior can be somewhat disconcerting. When applications are mailed off, SAT's become a blurred nightmare, and college visits are a vague memory, the reality sinks in: there is still a whole year left of high school. Many seniors experience feelings of restlessness or boredom as they walk around from the quad to the SAC to D house, dreaming of life in the big, bad world of college. Of course these feelings are alleviated by frequent trips to Coffee Connection, signing oneself out of school, and other Senior Slump behavior.

Amid the anti-climactic world of Senioritis, electives--including those in the social sciences, history, or foreign language arena--can sometimes be the saving grace. Because there is no formal social studies curriculum in twelfth grade, students take advantage of the numerous choices, such as Psychology, Vietnam, Political Thought, Women in History, Law, and Mythology, to name a few. The motivation for enrolling in these electives vary. "My counselor said I would never get into college with 14 free-blocks," explains one flippant senior, "although having ten is quite a squeeze." However, most students register for these electives because they are interested in the subject matter, which is generally unfamiliar to most.

"I've always enjoyed analyzing human behavior," says another senior, "....and I was looking forward to taking Psych for a long time." Classmates agree that learning about learning, memory, social psychology, human development, and Freudian psychology is new, untrodden ground. And while some complain about the hard tests and extensive papers, everyone admits that the high expectations and level of challenge are good preparation for college.

Kristen Silva has enjoyed her Women in American History class, which explores individual women and women's movements in United States history, because she has been able "to learn first hand what her mother and grandmother went through." Her classmates agree that whether studying the Suffragettes or women in the Revolutionary War, one is able to make key parallels to one's own life and experiences. "In the process," states brave Women in History student Joe Yoon, "through discussion, we are forced to deal with ourselves and our roles in society: past, present, and future."

Class discussion is a major attraction of the senior electives, especially those such as Vietnam and Women in History, which are multi-leveled. Women in History and Mythology student Jennifer O'Connor feels that "a unique part of her elective experience has been learning from her peers, some of whom have never been in [her] previous classes."

Mythology teacher Michael Fiveash enjoys teaching his senior elective: "It is exciting that students, many of whom have never taken Latin before, are able to study this incredibly interesting period." In addition, Fiveash notes that the semester format of these classes is "a good preview to what kids will find in college." Colleague Mary Keenan, who teaches Women in American History and Political Thought, agrees that the electives give Seniors a taste of a wide gamut of subjects, some which they will pursue further but others that they will not, nevertheless, "providing an introduction to ideas that will be valuable in further academic pursuits and in life."

When High School seems to be almost wrapping up, senior electives--and Marxism, nationalism, Ho Chi Minh, dream interpretation, Piaget, women artists, constitutional law, and the Odyssey--are a major force dragging seniors back on campus from their quadruple lunch blocks at Brueggers. Furthermore, as second semesters seniors begin new electives at the end of January , Senioritis is temporarily cured as the thrill of new subject matter brightens the monotonous high school days.

Psychology student Maggie Cohen cites additional reasons for enrolling in Senior electives. "My sex life has improved since the animal flirting tips in sociobiology unit." Cohen's uninhibited enthusiasm for psychology has helped her relate personally to the subject matter: "At first it was only Pavlov's dogs who were slobbering....but later, I was doing the slobbering."

"Aw, shucks," says a modest Dave Lee to a delighted Caroline Kim, who is touched by the early Valentine's Day gift.

Boys' basketball hopes for rebound in new year

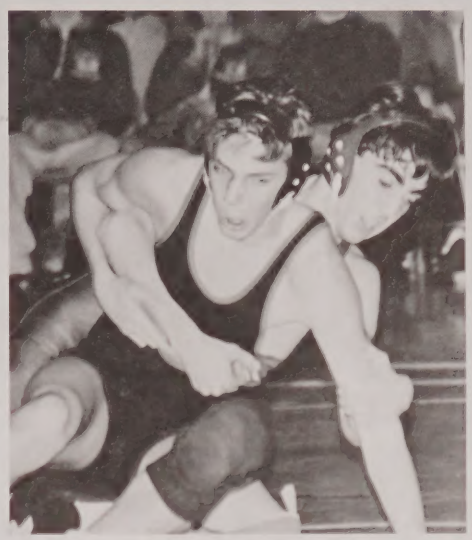
by Jason Hirschhorn

The Lexington boys' basketball team has not started the season as well as some may have hoped. The team had a 1-5 record going into a match with the Melrose Red-Raiders. The Minutemen often played well against teams but made crucial errors that let the game slip away in the final minutes.

Playing at home versus Melrose on Friday, January 5, the Minutemen gave the crowd an exciting game with 32 minutes of hard-fought, well-coached basketball from both teams. Melrose entered the game 6-2 overall and was led by talented senior guard Al Powell. Lexington's record entering the game did not indicate how well they had played the last few games, as they had lost a nail-biter to top-ranked Stoneham three days earlier. Lexington was ready for the Raiders, and they showed it.

Sophomore Taj Washington, who played well against Melrose last season, played equally well in this meeting, scoring 19 points in the game. Washington was not without scoring help, however. Junior guard Jon Mandle had four three-pointers in the game while helping to break Melrose's zone defense. The Minutemen also got fine contributions from sophomores John Yasaitis, Steve Nawoichik, Jason Solomon and Mike Ifill. As the game went into its waning moments, the Minutemen went to senior Darnell Hite on the wing. Hite showed his considerable athletic ability by scoring three quick baskets. Melrose responded with Powell scoring on the other end.

In the end Melrose made the crucial error. As they inbounded the ball after a Lexington basket, the Minutemen's press forced Melrose to desperately toss the ball inbounds, and it landed in the hands of Washington, who drove in for a lay-up that gave the Minutemen the lead for good. Foul shooting had plagued the Minutemen, but tonight it saved them. Junior captain Nate Jaffee hit his foul shots in the clutch, and played well overall, finishing with 10 points and 9 assists. The Minutemen are not yet considered in the same class as Middlesex League foes Belmont, Stoneham, Melrose, Wakefield, and Reading, but by beating one of the teams in that class, they have given fans a glimpse of their overwhelming potential.



Wrestling co-captain Carmine Rullo puts a devastating move on yet another hapless opponent.

Girls' track leaves opponents out of breath

by Amy Porter and Dave Myung

The Lexington girls' indoor track team (5-0) continued their undefeated season with a 58-28 win over Melrose at Reading High on January 18. Kristen Silva, Emily Ward, and Lindsay Martin began the night with a sweep of the two-mile, with times of 13:19, 13:20, and 14:22 respectively. Meanwhile, Vera Veldkamp (4'8") and Meredith Rommelfanger (4'6") took first and second in the high jump and Michelle Guinane won the shot put with a throw of 27'2".

Lexington took second and third in the 1000 yard run, the 300 yard dash, and the 45 yard hurdles. In the 1000, Ellen Humphries (2:56.4) was followed by tri-captain Amy Porter (3:04.8), while in the 300, Kate Waller (43.7) finished a step ahead of Amie Shei (43.8). Michelle Guinane took second in the hurdles with a time of 9.2, while Carolyn Shank (10.2) grabbed third place.

In the remaining events, the girls surrendered only one point. Hillary Donnellan, Chi-An Wang, and Leslie King made short work of the Melrose 600 yarders, taking first, second, and third with times of 1:36.4, 1:37.9, and 1:39.0, respectively. Distance specialists Kristen Johannson (5:44), tri-captain Lili Anderson (6:03), and Jantrue Ting (6:18) followed suit with a sweep in the mile. Tri-captain Shani Graham and Grace Licorish cruised to a one-two finish in the 60 yard dash in 7.7 and 7.8, respectively.

Junior Alexandra Bailly and the rest of the girls' track team are preparing for their showdown with Reading in February.

The girls, currently ranked 9th in Eastern Massachusetts, had some solid performances at Saturday's State Coaches Invitational at the Reggie Lewis State Track Facility. Johannson and Anderson ran personal bests in the two-mile with times of 12:15 and 12:24. Porter (2:57), Waller (3:06), and Maria Stavropolous (3:08) also ran personal bests in the 1000. Ellen Humphrey came close to placing with a 5:37 mile, while Tovah Day and Rommelfanger both cleared 4'8" in the high jump. Graham sprinted her way to the semifinals in the 55 meter dash with a time of 7.7. The middle distance crew consisting of King, Hillary Donnellan, Anna Riera, Alexandra Bailly, and Alison Peters performed well in the 300, 600 yard events as well as in the 4x200 relay.

Coach Philip Crosby was especially pleased with the 4x400 relay team, which ran its best time of the season with a 4:18.

"The girls (Shei, Licorish, Humphrey, and Donnellan) ran a great relay. With the time the ran, I think they have a good shot at beating the Reading relay team.

"The best part is that it wasn't the usual lineup. Chi-An [Wang] and Alex [Bailly] didn't run this time, but they have been running strong legs this season. I now have the luxury of having six runners who can run highly competitive quarters," gushed Crosby.

Indeed, the girls' indoor track team has a formidable opponent in perennial powerhouse Reading, but this team is determined.

"We're good. We're real good.." says senior co-captain Lili Anderson, who is anxiously awaiting the track team's next meet against Belmont.

Hockey captain Todd Spellman puts some fancy moves on his opponent.

Will the puck stop here?

by Jeff Needham

The Lexington High boys' hockey team dropped a 3-2 gut-wrencher to Reading at Burbank Arena in Reading. The Minutemen played the sixth ranked team in the state even all game before letting up the winning goal with just three seconds remaining in the third period.

Reading got on the board in the middle of the first period when senior forward Keith Schifano kicked in a controversial goal. The goal standing, the Minutemen began tougher defense. Senior forward Cliff Brangwynne fed senior defenseman Jeff Needham at the point. Needham blasted a one-timer past the Reading goalie to tie the game 1-1 at the end of the period.

Reading scored the lone goal in the second period, which ended 2-1. Lexington was plagued with penalties and played much of the period short-handed, providing few scoring opportunities.

Led by their defense, the Minutemen came out flying in the third period. Senior captain Todd Spellman tied the game at 2-2 on a power play. Then junior Brian Delaney passed to Brangwynne who found Spellman in the spot for an easy goal. Things looked bright for the Minutemen, who had not beaten the Rockets in several years. However, with just three seconds remaining in the period, Reading's captain Nick Scola skated the length of the ice and squeaked a goal by goalie Alex Olson. Olson played a spectacular game overall.

The rest of the week was successful for the Lexington team, who pounded Watertown 8-0 and tied Pentucket 2-2.

The Watertown game proved to be just what the Minutemen needed: a decisive win. Junior Kevin DeFrancesco got Lexington on the board first in the second period as he rifled a wrist shot past the Watertown goalie. This goal opened up the scoring for the Minutemen. Junior Marvin Amato, as well as Spellman, Delaney, and Brangwynne, scored in the second period. The scoring continued in the third period with Amato, Needham, and sophomore Jeff LoPresti all adding goals. Sophomore Olson recorded his first shutout in net.

The Pentucket game started strong for the Minutemen. DeFrancesco started the scoring near the end of the first period with assists from Delaney and Brangwynne. With ten seconds remaining in the first period junior Seth Robertson fed Amato for a one-timer to make the score 2-0 . However, Pentucket tied the game up in the second period.

Varsity Scoreboard

as of January 21, 1996

	W-L-T
Indoor Track	
Boys'	3-1-1
Girls'	5-0
Ice Hockey	2-7-2
Wrestling	4-0
Boys' Swimming	2-1
Basketball	
Boys'	3-9
Girls'	4-6

The boys' indoor track team has little to worry about with senior Bryant Lee anchoring the 4x400 meter relay, which recently qualified for States.

photo by Joe Yoon

Boys' track blows past Winchester, Watertown

by Peter Gelling

Winds were high as the boys' track team breezed through another week of Middlesex League competition. It started when the Minutemen ran over Winchester and ended four days later after the squad soundly defeated Watertown. Both meets, won by an average margin of 50 to 60, had only high points.

Against Winchester, Lexington met little competition. In the high jump, junior Tim Calvin captured first place after soaring over the 5'4" mark. Senior Ash Weaver came in a close second with a height of 5'2". Seniors Dave Lee (42'1") and Chi-Chen Wen (39'4") took second and third place in the shot put. In the 2 mile event, senior Al Soparkar took first place (10:58) with classmate Dave Myung finishing a mere two seconds behind, good for second place.

When the gun went off for the 1000-yard run, few expected a Lexington sweep. In the finish, however, senior Bryant Lee (2:38), senior Michael Hemond (2:40) and junior Geddes Golay (2:42) were in a league of their own. Running the 600, sophomore Josh Muller came in first with a time of 1:27.3, and up-and-coming freshman Jay Kasparian took a close second with 1:27.7.

It was no surprise that senior Andrew Richards (35.5) took first in the 300, and junior Todd Rosenfield came back from injury and grabbed second with a time of 36.1. In the one mile event, junior Aaron Adler ran 4:56 to take first, and after Calvin came down from the high jump, he managed second with 4:58. The second sweep of the meet came in the dash, when Ethan Fried (5.5), Eric Wang (5.5) and Adam Fisher (5.6) finished off Winchester.

Four days later, the Minutemen once again met minimal competition. The meet against Watertown was an easy one, and a historic one as well. There were 10 first-place finishes for Lexington, including a first place in every single even, a rare occurrence in track. Another note of historical importance was that Lexington managed four sweeps in the events. In the 1000, Calvin went full speed ahead and captured first at 2:41. Senior J.P. Mahoney took second at 2:46, and junior Steve Hart took a close third, finishing at 2:49. Soparker (5:01) and Myung (5:03) were neck and neck once again as Lexington swept the mile.

In the two mile, Adler ran 10:53 to take first, Hemond took second with 11:31, and sophomore Tim Attanucci took third at 11:58. The last sweep of the meet came in the high jump when Calvin won again at 5'4" and senior Dave Kern and junior Peter Gelling took second and third with jumps of 5'2" each. The victories boosted the confidence of the Minutemen, but it is nothing to get excited about as coach Bud Reed explains. "These were our easy meets, now it's time to prepare for our hard ones," he said.

The "hard ones" begin with a meet against Stoneham. Some might say that the meets against Winchester and Watertown were merely practice for the real challenge which lies ahead for the Minutemen.

Girls' basketball dribbles its way to winning record

by Becky Ticotsky

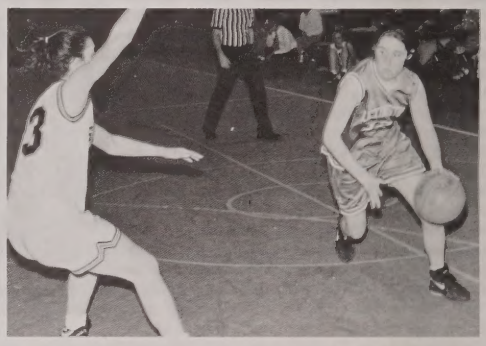
Junior Jackie Yerardi, a guard on the LHS girls' varsity basketball team, turned 17 on January 5. In that night's game against the Melrose Red Raiders, the birthday girl got her wish: she led the team with 23 points. Yerardi's three key three-pointers propelled the Minutemaids to a 44-40 victory. It was the team's third straight win, giving them a 5-2 record in Middlesex League competition and a 5-4 record overall.

Lexington had the lead throughout the contest. With 25 seconds remaining, sophomore forward Andrea Pawliczek hit two free-throws to seal the game. As one of the best forwards in the league, she was often double or triple-teamed by the Melrose defenders. In the previous win, against Stoneham, Pawliczek led Lexington with 30 points.

The team's only senior, Petra Hagenah, was the leading scorer in Lexington's victory over Reading. Despite being the youngest team in the league with six juniors, five sophomores, and freshman Shanel Mercer on the roster, the Maids are beating more experienced opponents.

"We are beyond where I thought we would be," Coach Laura Lasa said following the victory over Melrose. Lasa takes pride in her team's hard work and impressive scoring record. Junior forward Carolyn Wengler commented that the players "try really hard and hustle." She also noted the team's excellent defense and boxing out ability.

Yerardi is now very confident. "We're a young team, so I didn't expect a lot, but I knew we had talent," she said. "We can beat anybody if we work hard." Sophomore guard Brooke Coffman summed up the Minutemaids' Cinderella season thus far by saying, "We've proved ourselves." Even on Yerardi's birthday the girls basketball team didn't get any gifts from their opponents. They've had to earn all of their points, and they've done the job well.



Sophomore sensation Andrea Pawliczek, the top scorer in the Middlesex League, has made a habit out of burning opponents in the paint.

Swim team dives into competition

The young and talented boys' swim team are making the best of their already successful season.

by Jonathan Amar
and Jesse Herman

Despite losing to Malden Catholic in a meet on December 21, the boys swim team rebounded to defeat the Belmont Marauders on January 5. However, because the Malden Catholic meet occurred outside of league play, Lexington's record stands at 1-0 in Middlesex League competition.

With many of last year's top swimmers in college, and injuries plaguing other swimmers, the Minutemen arrived in Belmont without a true superstar. According to junior Bob MacLean, "Last year we could just wait for [class of 1995 alumni] Chris Randall and Noah Herman to swim their events. Now, we have to rely on teamwork to pull us through the season."

The swimmers managed to withstand a Marauder attack in the early events. After the Individual Medley, swum by junior Josh Caras, junior Dan Paulsen, and senior co-captain Christopher Amar, Belmont had a 30-16 lead. With MacLean, junior Jesse Herman and senior co-captain Tom Kennedy leading the way in the 50-yard freestlye event, the Minutemen managed to shorten the Marauder lead, 35-27. Herman placed first in a time of 24:96 seconds, leading the Minutemen to their first first place finish of the meet. From then on, the Minutemen broke loose, dominating the majority of the events. After the 100-yard freestyle, in which MacLean took first, and with an impressive showing from junior Jeff Erickson, Belmont's lead was cut to 50-43.

The real turning point in the meet came in the 500-yard freestyle event when juniors Steve Davis, Will Ronco, and Jay Corr swept the field, taking first, second and third. From then on, the Minutemen never let the Marauders regain the lead. With strong showings in the 200 yard freestlye relay by Ben Bines, Andrew Garland, Peter Groblewski, Brad Grant and Jared Fotis, Lexington took a commanding 66-57 lead, never looked back, and took home the victory, 87-82.

According to Amar, "Belmont was smaller and had some strong swimmers, but due to our numbers and our spirit, we were able to pull through this time." The Minuteman could never have won, if it wasn't for the effort of every swimmer on the team. When it comes down to it, an entire swim meet can be decided upon one finish.

Wrapping up the Minutemen's early January schedule, was a meet against a ferocious, league-leading Reading team. Although Lexington lost, they put forth a truly valiant effort, many of the swimmers coming through with their best times of the season. "We had an outstanding meet," explained junior standout Jason Pasquale, "they just had a better one."

Such was the case, as the Minutemen battled to the end. First place finishes came from Herman (50 free, 100 breast), and two bold relay teams led by Dan Paulson, MacLean, Davis, and rookie splendor Ben Bines. Although in the end, Lexington could not pull off the victory, scores of personal best times were recorded, and all of the Minutemen battled for important second, third and fourth place finishes. The real winners of the meet, were Minutemen Jon Amar, big brother Chris, Josh Caras, Will Ronco, Jeff Erickson, John Langone, and Kieron Flint, all of whom came through in clutch situations.